

1941
AN
ARGUMENT

UPON THE

Woollen Manufacture

OF *K*

GREAT-BRITAIN, *Mollen*
Heating

Plainly demonstrating, That

I R E L A N D

Must be speedily employed therein,
as the only Means to recover its
Decay, and to prevent its Ruin.

Quos Deus vult Perdere, Dementat prius.

D U B L I N :

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AN
ARGUMENT
UPON THE
Woollen Manufacture
OF
GREAT-BRITAIN.



GENERAL Infatuation has of late Years seiz'd this Country. We court our Ruin, in every Instance, more eagerly, than other Nation seek their *Interests*.

The *Interests* of England, as they are now understood, are the *Interests* of Particulars against the Publick.

There is no settled Interest, no National Interest. It is private, local, personal.

Thus our Maxims are grown absurd, arbitrary, and contradictory in their own Nature.

And our *Conduct* (the Result of these Maxims) such as runs counter to the very first Lights of *Human Reason*, *passionate*, *violent*, and *oppressive* to the *Minor Part* of the Society, calculated by the *Major*, fortitiously also, to their own Ruin.

From having been bought out of our *Reason* in *grand Instances*, it is grown a National Habit to neglect the Use of it in all, and, from having been at first accustomed to part with it to our *private Interest*, it has fled so far from us, that we have the Use of it no longer to direct us truly to any one Interest of the *Publick*.

England hath no Mines of Gold, or Silver, or of Precious Stones. Its only *Riches* are its *Trade*.

Trade cannot exist under heavy Taxes : Yet our Taxes are double what they are in *France*, even in the Times of hottest War.* They pay, at this Hour, under Eleven Shillings *per Head* : We, in Time of Peace, above Twenty.

Trade cannot exist in a Country where the *Price of Land* is excessive dear, when the *Trade* of that Country principally arises from its own *Product*. — Our *Trade* arises from our own *Product*, and our *Land*

* This Paper was first Published in March 1735, before the Peace was concluded.

is dearer than in any Part of *Europe* (excepting *Holland*, whose Commerce does in no Sort depend upon it.)

Our *Trade* therefore cannot exist, unless our Taxes be diminished---Or unless we reduce the *Price of our Lands*. ---Or turn our *Commerce* upon *Foreign Product*.

We have no Hope to see our Taxes sufficiently diminished.---The *false Interest* of Particulars will never suffer the Second to be effected, till it effects itself; before which our *Commerce* will be lost. ---

We have therefore nothing else to do, than to turn our *Commerce* upon *Foreign Product*; that is, the Product of Countries where Things are cheaper than they are with us

Foreign Product is proper or improper, *Improper Foreign Product*, is the *Commodity*, or *Manufacture* of another People, entirely distinct from us in Point of Government, and in Point of Interest. *Proper Foreign Product* (a wrong Term in itself, but used here to humour the narrow Notions of the Times) is the *Product of Colonies*, or *Countries united to us*, or *dependent on us*.

Commerce, founded upon *improper Foreign Product*, is very expedient, and very profitable. *Commerce*, founded upon *proper Foreign Product*, is more expedient, more profitable, and more certain.

Commerce, in improper Foreign Product, employs an infinite Number of People in Navigation: Its principal Profits arise upon Freight, and upon prudently buying in cheap Times, to sell again in dear. The Commerce of Holland is, in great Part, of this Kind, The Commerce of the Genoeſe was antiently the ſame.

But *Commerce of this Kind may loſe its Channel, and ſuffer by many Accidents; and, with reſpect to particular Countries, be ruined by the Wiſdom of the oppoſite Government. The Profits of it muſt be leſs, becauſe the Nations you deal with being the Root of the Commerce, muſt have a great Share in the Gain.*

But *Commerce founded upon proper Foreign Product (or the Product of your own Colonies, Countries united to you, or in Dependance on you) is a Natural Commerce, and ought to be as tenderly treated, and as much indulged, as that of the Mother Country; having no Difference from Her's, but as She is reſolved to make a Difference. It cannot eaſily be deſtroyed but by oppreſſing and diſtreſſing ſuch a Country; and Oppreſſion and Diſtreſs will ruin Commerce wherever it meets with it.*

Its Profit is infinitely greater: For as the Root of that Commerce is our own, the whole of the Gain is our own alſo. The main

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1. By alienating the Affections of a vast Body of our Fellow-Subjects, who envying our superior Privileges, will be ever ready to seize Occasion to abridge them, and to reduce us to their own Level of Ruin.

2. By obliging us to govern the People it is exercised upon, by a *military Force*; which *Force* may be as well employed against our Liberties as *theirs*.

With Respect to *Commerce*, which is more immediately to our present Point, such a *Conduct* must entirely confound it.

1. Because a *lively Commerce* is incompatible with a *Government by Force*: *New People* will never settle in such a Country, the *old Inhabitants* will fall from it,

2. Because *no kind* of Manufacture, or *Branch* of Trade will flourish, where *any* is prohibited; for Men are never satisfied, but that the Power which has abolished *one*, may deprive them of any *other*.

The *Genius* of Trade *sickens* under the Reflection of a bare Possibility of *Restraint*; and therefore must grow *very languid* upon Reflection, on an *actual* Restraint, a Restraint rendered perpetually *present*, although but by a single *Instance*.

Thus must the *Conduct* and *Maxims* of Great Britain, with Regard to her Colonies, Countries united to her, and dependant on her,

her, destroy (not only the Liberty, but) the Commerce of those *Countries*.

But it has been proved, and is evident, that her own cannot exist, without it now founds itself upon the *Commerce of those Countries*.

It follows, therefore, that the *present Conduct and Maxims* of Great Britain, with Respect to the Commerce of those Countries, if pursued farther, must ruin her *own Trade*.

The General Conclusion upon the whole is this, that *Great Britain* for the future, must change their *Conduct* with respect to these *Countries*.

Ireland is the chief of these *Countries*.

— She must therefore chiefly change her *Conduct* with regard to *Ireland*.

As a Merchant in his *particular Sphere*, employs the *cheapest* Manufacturer he can find; so *England* in her *general* Merchandize, must employ the *Poor of Ireland*, and the *Product of Ireland* as the *cheapest* she can find.

And as Men pour Water into Pumps, which once set moving, throw up Water in Return, as long as they require; in like Manner must *England* give Encouragement to *Ireland*; which Encouragement will render infinite Returns.

England has never exercised her Power over *Ireland*, but she has suffer'd for it.

It

It is demonstrable in two Instances, which are the Principal in which she has done it.

D. 1666.

I. The Act to prohibit *Irish Cattle*.

II. The Destruction of the *Woollen Manufacture* of that Kingdom.

The first is generally now allowed destructive. The second begins, by its fatal Consequences, somewhat to open the Eyes of Men.

It was also seen in a *third Instance*; the Prohibition of importing certain Commodities directly from the Plantations to *Ireland*, without touching first upon *England*. But this Prohibition was lately taken off, after that Nation had laboured under the Restriction half a Century. During this Law, the Price of those Commodities, Pitch, Tar, &c. were so raised by that Difficulty, that *Ireland* paid 100,000 *l.* per *Ann.* to foreign Nations, for what they might have had, and now have from our own.

The *Consequences* of the Destruction of the *Woollen Trade* in *Ireland* were: 1. The Expulsion of 20,000 Manufacturers at once from that Country. 2. Their Retreat into Foreign Countries. 3. The Establishment thereupon of the *Woollen Manufacture* in almost all Parts of *Europe*. 4. The Exportation of *English* and *Irish* Wooll. 5. The gradual

gradual and notorious Decay of our Trade from that Hour.

From these Consequences we ought to observe, that the Decay of our Trade does not arise from the *Exportation of Irish Wooll*.

That were to make an Effect a Cause.

To ascribe the Misfortune of the Retreat of Manufactures from *Ireland*, and the Establishment of Foreign Manufactures, as a Cause, would be equally wrong.

These are but Effects of one fatal Cause.

The *vain Expectation* of engrossing the Woollen Manufacture to ourselves; the *narrow Principles* we have spoken of above. — *Principles*, which, in proving *too much*, prove *nothing* but their own Absurdity.

The Argument which proves that *any one Branch of Trade* should be confined to *any one Part* of these Dominions, exclusive of the rest, will tend to prove that even that *Part* should be again divided to the Prejudice of a *Part* of itself. Thus, if *Great Britain* should argue that *Ireland* should have no Trade in Wooll, the rest of *Great Britain* may argue that *Yorkshire* ought to be excluded too. And thus we may argue down the Manufacture, by a Parity of Reasoning, into one *County*, into one *Town*, into one *House in that Town*, and to one Manufacturer in *that House*.

And

And surely, that Argument which proves that the Woollen Manufacture of *Great Britain* would be most advantageous when there was but one Man employed in it, will hardly be allowed a good one. No! let us open our Minds: Let us think in a more generous Manner: Let us think that all Men have an equal Right to *Liberty*, and to all the Advantages of human Nature with ourselves: Let us consider, if *Power* could take away the *Natural Rights* of Mankind, what *Right* would now remain to ourselves of *Freedom*? Let us credit this *Truth* — That Nations are only *powerful*, in Proportion as they are *united*: And, let us understand, that no People can be united, where *equal Liberty*, and *equal Advantages* are not permitted.

Monopolies are destructive to a *State*.

Kingdoms may admit of *Monopolies* as well as *private Companies*; and the most *horrid Monopoly* of all is, where, in a *Kingdom* composed of many different States, one State is suffered to assume, or engross any *particular Advantage*, to the Exclusion of the rest.

Such *Monopolies* are not found in *absolute Monarchies*, even in the worst of Governments: But *absolute Monarchies* are the *only Governments* in which they may be *suffered*.

They

They cannot be maintained without Force; and Force may be allowed in absolute Governments, because no *Liberty can be lost*: But where *Liberty can be lost*, Force cannot be permitted, but *it will be lost*.

The *Liberty* therefore of Great Britain, depends upon the Freedom of the People of Ireland. And,

The *Commerce of this Kingdom* has been proved to depend upon *their Liberty in Trade*: What then should give us Cause to hesitate, in granting them every Advantage with ourselves? Is it that they are a *distinct* Government, and that this Circumstance renders it unsafe? But they complain, that our Laws have Force among them.——If not, unite them: *Give them an equal Representative: Make them the same People*: The *same Constitution* must take away all Objection, if there should be *any* now. Is it the *Fear* of being underfold by them, that prevents this great Design? Whose *Fear* can this be? It cannot be the *Fear of the Publick*, for it is well known, that every Thing gained by *Ireland*, must center here at last.

It cannot be the *Fear of the Publick*, because (as we have proved) nothing but the Encouragement of their Trade, can save our Commerce. It must then be the *Fear of private Men*: And of what private Men?

Men? Those, whose *Estates* arise from *Wooll*; those, who *manufacture Wooll*. These imagine their *Estates* must fall upon such a Change: That the *Price of their Labour* will diminish. — But their *Estates* are now raised too high to suffer any *Commerce* to thrive, or to continue in our *Favour*; and their *Labour* is too dear.

If they will have *Commerce* then, they must suffer their *Estates* to fall, their *Labour* to lower its *Price*: If they will suffer no *Commerce*, their *Estates* will produce them nothing. — Their *Labour* will not be wanted. Which is then better? that their *Estates* should lower in their *Value*, or that they should produce them nothing? — That their *Labour* should fall in *Price*, or that they should never labour? They have ruined their *Estates*, and their *Labour*, by pushing up their *Value*. They must save them by bringing them down. Had *England* no other *Cause* for *Ruin*, her *Commerce*, as it has been lately managed, would have ruined her? She has fattened with too much *Precipitation*, and there is a *ne plus ultra* in all Nature.

This Truth is more evident in Trade, than in any other Thing. For that low *Price* of Commodities and Labour, which is the Foundation of it, is changed into the very contrary by its Continuance.

Little

Little States may therefore soon be gorged by advantageous Traffick, and soon be ruined by it. *Great Countries* have this Advantage; as they rise *slower*, so they fall *later*. But *England*, in the Management of her Commerce, has lost this Advantage, which was natural to her; by *confining Commerce* to herself, she is, in Effect, to be considered but as a *little Country*. And, like a *little Country*, has been quickly ruined by it.

To have avoided this, she should have admitted equal Profits to *Ireland*, that she might have grown up with her: And to recover this *Error*, she must act upon the same *Principle*; she must submit to *reduce* herself: If she does not, she will be more severely *reduced* by other Means?

Let the *Interests* of *private Men*, therefore, no longer blind the *Publick*. But these are not the *Interests* of private Men; they are *false Principles*, which the *Selfishness* of the Times renders favourably to the *Majority*.

Is it the *Interest* of *private Men*, to neglect a certain Profit, for *imaginary Gain*? For *Gain* impossible? For *Gain*, if possible; yet destructive? A Nation circumstanced like ours, has been already proved incapable of engrossing *Commerce* to the Exclusion of its *Colonies*.

And such a *Commerce*, if obtained, has been proved *destructive*: But to admit *Ireland* to a Freedom in Commerce; must be certain *Gain*: For *Ireland* would gain by a Freedom of Commerce. And what *Ireland* gains, must center here. Ay, but this must come out of some Branch of our own *Manufacture*. As suppose their Gain on the *Woollen Manufacture*. This Gain must come out of our *Woollen Manufacture*.

Can we keep our *Manufactures* as we are?

If we can—Why so much *Noise* and *Clamour* upon the Subject? Why such *Complaints* of Manufacturers? *Applications* to Parliaments, and *Committees* appointed to consider these *Complaints* and *Applications*? Why *Bills* brought in for many Years together to secure it?

If we cannot;—How would the *Gain of the Irish* be out of the *Manufacture of England*? The *Gain of the Irish* must be out of the *Woollen Manufacture* of those Countries which will succeed *Us* in it: And who will succeed *Us* in it? Or rather, Who has already got it from us? *France* in the principal Part.

The *Gain of the Irish*, then, in the *Woollen Manufacture*, must be a *Gain* upon the *Manufacture of France*.

If

If to *permit* the Woollen Trade to *Ireland*, be a Gain *upon* France; to *prohibit* the Woollen Trade to *Ireland*, must be a Gain to *France*: And shall a Briton argue for the Gain of *France*?

Could the *Irish* recover the *Woollen Trade*? Rather, can *We* recover it any other Way? *If we can*, Why have we never taken *that* Way?—*If we cannot*, shall we refuse to make *this* Experiment? But the *Irish* can recover the *Woollen Trade*; I. Because they *can* undersel our Rivals in that Manufacture. II. Because if they manufactured at home, they would export no *Raw Wooll*, or *Woollen Yarn*, to Foreign Manufacturies; and without *Wooll*, or *Woollen Yarn*, of their Growth, those Manufacturies cannot exist.

As to the first it is evident, that the *Irish* do it: They have a *clandestine Trade* in Stuffs to *Lisbon*: The *French* Trade thither also, and so do *We*, in the *same Commodities*. The *Irish* undersel both the *French* and *Us*.—The *English* Manufacturers complain of this *clandestine Trade*. —The *French* dislike it with more Reason: For, if it were possible to prevent it, and it were prevented, the *French* would come into the Place of the *Irish*; but the *English* would be underfold *as much as ever*.

B

As

As to the second Argument, that if the *Irish* were allowed the Manufacture of *Wooll*, they would export no *Wooll*, or *Woollen Yarn* to *France*.

This is evident from the Nature of the Thing; *Men* study their *Profits*, and this would be manifestly against their *Profit*.—*Wooll manufactured* is worth *five* Times as much as *Wooll unmanufactured*; and therefore to sell their *Wooll* abroad, would be a *Loss* to them, unless they sold it for *five* Times what they sold it for at home. And if they who bought it, gave but *one Third* of that Price, they could not *use* it when they had bought it.

This all *Ireland* must see, and therefore unite to prevent it; whereas it is feared that all *Ireland* now finds it its Interest to promote it.

Impeach this Argument.—Allow some *Wooll and Yarn* would still be run; would not the Quantity be extremely *less*?—Being *less*, would it not be *dearer*?—Would not the Manufactures arising out of that Commodity, in Consequence *diminish* in Quantity, and *augment* in Price?—And what other Method can be taken, better to destroy a *Rival* Manufacture, than to *diminish* its Quantity, and *augment* its Price?

To

To pursue the same Question: —Is it doubted that the *Irish* Wooll and Yarn be necessary to the Manufactures of *France*? We are told by all who are conversant in this Business, that they cannot carry on the Trade without them. They may make very coarse Cloths with their own Wooll, which may serve in some Degree, for ordinary *home Consumption*. They make the *finest* Cloths with *Spanish Wooll*; but the *Cloths and Stuffs for Exportation and general Use*, are of a *middle Sort*, and cannot be made without a Mixture of *Irish Wooll*. — This we are told.---This the *French* have acknowledged in the most publick Manner. But if we were not *told it*, and if it were not *acknowledged*, is it not self-evident?

I. Do not the *French* consume greater Quantities, at far greater Price, than their own Wooll and Woollen Yarn can bear? Would they act so wild a Part as to do this, if it were not necessary to their Manufacture?

II. Do not the very Manufactures of *England* depend, in some Measure, on the Woollen Yarn of *Ireland*?---If they do! the Manufactures of *France* must do it in a much higher Degree: For the Wooll of *France* differs far more than the Wooll of *England*, from the Wooll of *Ireland*. But whether they do, enquire of the Manufacturers

turers of *Bristol*, and of those of *Norwich*; they will tell you that they cannot work without it.

To reduce also this Argument below its full Force; not that we may suit it more to *Reason*; but that we may render it less Obnoxious to *Prejudice* and *Passion*.--Let us suppose it only strong in *Part*.--Let us suppose the Wooll of *Ireland* necessary only to *France*, for such Manufactures as it is necessary to in *England*.---Would not the Woollen Manufacture established in *Ireland* confound the Commerce of *France*, for so much? Is not this *Species* of Manufacture a very considerable Branch of the *Woollen Trade*?--Would not therefore the Establishment of the *Woollen Trade* of *Ireland* confound the *Commerce of France*, in a considerable Branch of the *Woollen Trade*. As we now stand, are we able to confound it in any Branch?--It is allowed we cannot.--If it is allowed we cannot, shall we not employ the People of *Ireland* who can?

Let me here observe one Circumstance. In whatever Branches of Manufacture the *Irish* or *English Wooll* is employed, in *France* it works up twice as much of the *French Wooll*: Thus one thousand Stone of *Irish* or *English Wooll* produce three thousand Stone of *French Manufacture*. If the *Irish* therefore, were now allowed to work up
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all their *Wooll*, they could but Manufacture one third of that *Quantity*. This is the only *Quantity*, or only *Kind* of Cloth in *France* for *Exportation*, and the greatest Part of it is employed in *Exportation*.

All the Cloth of *France* for *Exportation* is thus destroyed ; yet the *Irish* gain but one third of that *Exportation*. The Demand for Cloth abroad must continue the same.-- There must then remain *two Thirds* of that Demand unsatisfied.——Who can satisfy this Demand? *Foreigners* cannot, from the Nature of their *Wooll*. The *Irish* cannot, because they have not Quantity sufficient.-- The *English* therefore must.

Thus do the *English* plainly benefit as much again, by opening the *Irish Commerce*, as the *Irish* can do themselves; for of the Ruins of the *French Manufacture*, *two Thirds* must demonstrably fall into our Lap.

Thus do we plainly recover the *Woollen Trade*, and that in a Way, for as short a Time, and in as small a Degree detrimental to the Rents of *England*, or to the Poor of *England*, as can possibly be conceived. The greater Demand of the Commodity which must ensue ; will keep up the Price of the Commodity, and consequently of our Land. The greater Consumption must employ the Poor.

If

If the Rents of England can be maintained upon the Foot on which they now stand, they will be maintained upon that Foot, by this Expedient, which seems to promise to confine the whole Trade to our own Dominions. If they cannot be maintained upon this Foot, we shall have the Comfort to perceive, after they are once fallen to their due Standard, that they will daily rise upon such Foundation as will maintain them when they are risen.

But on the other Hand, we shall find that no other Scheme can have Effect.—— Our *Woollen Manufacture* must be totally lost.—— The rest of our Trade must follow.—— The Rents of the whole Kingdom will be every where reduced.—— *A dismal Poverty, a general Distress, an universal Discontent, Faction, Tumult, Civil War, Anarchy and Tyranny* will sink us, by a natural Succession into the Circumstances of an *Asiatick Province, from which we shall never rise.*

I conclude with these Sentiments, altho' they appear, at present, contrary to the Judgment of the Nation,

I. A Nation will not grow Poor by increase of Money.

II. A Nation will not grow rich, by refusing to employ any of her Subjects.

III,

III. A Nation will never thrive by Means which have brought her to Ruin.

IV. A Nation may attempt Impossibilities, but will never succeed.

V. A Nation may persevere in an Error, till its Ruin becomes inevitable. *May it never be the Case of this.*



Post-



POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the first Publication of this Paper (which was last Year) there hath appeared a Treatise upon the same Subject, intitled, *The Golden Fleece.* —

The Accuracy of the Facts contained in it, and the wonderful Sagacity of the Author in his Reasoning upon them, deserve a particular Attention.

The first Passage I shall observe, is that in which he tells us, *That the Wooll of Ireland, produced annually is 300,000 Packs, which at 6 d. per Pound (a Price it has often born there) amounts to one Million eight hundred thousand Pounds, above one hundred thousand Pounds per Ann. more than the whole Rents of Ireland, in every Kind of Produce put together, have ever been before computed at.*

In

In the second Place, Page 14. — We are told, *That every Pack of Wooll manufactured in Ireland, over and above the Home Consumption, is almost the same Loss to Great Britain as if manufactured in Foreign Countries.* At the same Time, the same Author informs us, *That one Pack of Irish Wool will work up two of French, and so produce in the whole three Packs of French Manufacture.* — The Force of this Argument therefore is, although he has declined to give it its full Weight, that it is almost as good for *England* that *France* should manufacture three Yards of Cloth, as that *Ireland* should manufacture One.

The next Discovery is as notable as the rest. — It is a Secret to recover a Manufacture, ruined from a Load of Taxes, by laying still a greater Tax upon it. — The Duties upon Hides, Candles, Soap, painted Silks, Starch, &c. amount to more than 500,000*l.* per *Ann.* which falling upon every Consumer in the Kingdom, both from Luxury and Necessity, affect all the Manufactures in the Kingdom, and the *Woollen* in particular, perhaps, in the Proportion of 40 or 50,000*l.* — Our Author tells us, that *the Charge* has destroyed that Trade---which he purposes to recover by taking off these Taxes, and lay-
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ing *the whole Charge* of 500,000l. upon the Wooll only.

A S to the Author's Scheme of the Register for *Ireland* — I beg Leave to ask these few Questions upon it, and I have done — Is his Register proposed to be established by an English, or by an Irish Act of Parliament — If by an English — Will he answer for the Execution of it? — If by an Irish. — Will he undertake to gain the Consent of that Kingdom to it?

F I N I S.



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